WAR LETTERS FROM FRANCE

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WAR LETTERS FROM FRANCE

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EDITED
BY
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AND
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PREFACE

TO A FRENCHWOMAN IN AMERICA

WE used to meet to read our news from France; the letters which we had received ourselves and those which our friends had received, or perhaps some touching passages copied from a friend's letter by a sympathetic hand. Sometimes there were brief cards from the front, hastily penciled between two alarms; sometimes there were long missives written in the enforced leisure of the hospital, in tottering strokes with the feeling of langorous repose in their tepid ink. There were letters from mourners, too, bordered in broad black lines and written in large determined strokes; and some whose telltale pages still kept the trace of tears. There were messages of grief in which the stricken heart of wife or sister strove in vain to reach or to maintain the supreme heights of a mother's anguished calm. We read and re-read these touching letters. We were French, and it seemed as though they were written to us, to whomever they were addressed. We made a common fund of them, the better to appreciate their noble courage and hope. And when our American friends, finding us after the reading more melancholy and yet more

confident, bowed down with grief but still sustained in pride, asked hesitatingly, "What news?" our only reply was to hand them the letters which had arrived on the week's steamer.

Our American friends, too, found letters from France in their mail. We lent them ours and they offered us theirs in return. Among them were letters from Frenchmen at the front and in the hospitals, but oftener letters of officials in the service of their fatherland or from Americans in France in the service of humanity. We read these letters with great interest and wished to copy them. But the Americans in America are more practical than the Frenchman in America and much more practical than the Frenchman in France. "Why copy these letters?" said one American friend. "Print them and publish them for the benefit of your compatriots, the old men and the women and children who are suffering the torments of this war." Your kind heart kindled immediately at this suggestion: you begged our letters of us. And when you beg, madam—is it always so or only when you beg for France?—one cannot, one dare not refuse.

What will our correspondents say? They thought they were writing for our eyes alone. What reproaches may they not heap on us when they see that we have given to the public their private messages without more alteration than the elimination

of a few details of too personal or too insignificant a nature to be printed? Have we the right to allow these self-revelations of our friends, made in the unconstraint of privacy, to pass from hand to hand among strangers? "Yes," you replied, "for out of all these revelations of courage, of suffering, of hope, there comes one single great revelation—the heart of France. And the portrait of the France that we see in these letters is all the more true, all the more faithful, as it is painted from life, without constraint or pose, caught without warning and left without retouching. Moreover this portrait of France is not theirs or ours to keep. In this crisis, when everyone is offering his all to the fatherland, how can they keep for themselves any part of their experience—that is, any part of the experience of France—France, our country which asks nothing but justice, has nothing to fear from truth?"

From the moment of your response, I was the accomplice of your purpose. I gave you the best of my letters. I begged others, even perhaps to the point of indiscretion. You were persuasive; and taught by you, I became exacting, some even said tyrannical. The precious booty was carefully inventoried, catalogued and classified. There were the letters of the fighters and the wounded, letters to relatives and friends, letters still more sacred—for have you not coaxed from me even the letter of a

little child? There were letters from scholars, from artists, from simple honest people, Frenchmen and Americans; letters from the front and from the rear; letters from the hospital and from the hearthstone; letters from the country and from the city. They have all been sorted, translated, annotated by friendly hands with the delicacy of touch appropriate to pages which record in suffering and sympathy such noble wealth of courage, pride and undying hope.

We have taken rigorous pains not to alter the slightest phrase. These letters are the spontaneous testimony to the moral grandeur of a nation: and the testimony is not revised, it is simply received. This is not a work of literature, but a tribute to humanity. In these few pages, suffering, courage and hope speak their simple language. And it would be unpardonable in me, if, after this explanation of your charitable purpose, I were any longer to keep those who are anxious to share in the message of these letters from listening to their sincere and touching words.

If we put the seashell to our ear, we hear the eternal murmur of the infinite ocean. Have we not reason to believe that from a few simple letters we can hear the heartbeat of a nation?

A. DE LAPRADELLE

July 14, 1915.

I

AT THE FRONT

WAR LETTERS FROM FRANCE

I

AT THE FRONT

EARLIEST LETTERS

ON the eighth of September a troop of soldiers were retreating from the north. Up to the very environs of Paris their confidence and hope remained unshaken. An infantry sergeant writes:

Our retreat as far as Provins has been exhausting: marches and counter-marches, engagements, et cetera, and the Germans chasing us hard all the time to prevent our crossing the Oise, and then the Aisne, and then the Marne. I do my duty through it all.

On the ninth of September, the cavalry sergeant A. F. writes from Alsace:

We have been hearing the enemy's cannon frequently. We all have the greatest confidence. We

are more than ever convinced of the success of our arms, the final victory that shall crown our efforts. In spite of our fatigues we shall conquer in the end.

* * * * *

On the eighth of September, 1914, a lieutenant writes from Alsace:

Our unit, composed entirely of reservists, as well as the whole division to which it belongs, was rapidly assembled, and thanks to the fine spirit animating every man, we were able to start immediately for the firing line. We entered Alsace in order to coöperate in the movement directed against Strasburg. The movement, as you know, failed. We had to retreat.

During this retreat, foot by foot, there was no weakening of the endurance of the troops.

In this movement my battery took part in a skirmish and in a very violent engagement in which the number of Germans lost amounted to a high figure. During eight days of struggle we took only two or three hours' rest a night. The morale of our troops has been excellent, and these early affairs show that our reserve troops may prove a useful factor in the battles to come. Retiring to recover from our losses and get some rest, we have resumed our advance.

Little by little we are regaining the lost territory in the region of the Vosges.

Here the letter was stopped by the receipt of marching orders. It continued a little later with the following vivid descriptive passage:

The flames of a village destroyed by shell fire, a livid moonlight and a terrific storm, such were the precursors of our entrance this morning into a pretty village of the Vosges, where a dozen houses were gutted, burned or totally demolished by shells. Chickens were pecking at the door-sills of the deserted houses. That is war! Our men might have been put in bad humor by all this. But no! Their witty remarks cheered the situation. They are laughing and chatting now, while the German bombs are falling not far from us, whistling through the air with metallic shrieks, followed by frightful explosions. Our men are getting used to this music of a special style.

But soon the advance was stopped and the soldiers intrenched. The letter continues September 30:

For the last five days we have made no advance, being busily engaged in intrenching positions which seem to be impregnable. When we halt we have a chance to rest and we have taken full advantage of

these five days of rest with their beautiful sunny weather to get slicked up a bit. It is a picturesque scene, this taking a bath between your trunk on the left (if you can call our little kit-case with its supply of necessary toilet articles a trunk) and your uniform on the right, with the revolver within easy reach to seize in a jiffy if the alarm is sounded. But once cleaned up and dressed in fresh linen what a joy it is to stretch out on the grass in the sun without thought of time! For we sleep at any moment and so peacefully. Suddenly a light touch on the shoulder: "Lieutenant!" A man stands before you with his heels together, and with a smile hands you a bit of paper: "March during the formation of the Echelons, direction 2. . . . !" We are up with a jump and get our uniforms buttoned. A crisp order and the sleepers are on their feet and on their horses. The horses start with a scratch and a scramble, the camp is broken. The battery wakes up too. We are feeding our ogres—modern ostriches that swallow powder and copper voraciously with an incredible iron digestion. Then all panting and smoking after their deadly attack on the enemy these monstrous beasts stop and give us a new period of repose.

The soldiers spent their period of repose talking with the inhabitants who by the Mayor's proclama-

tion had remained in the villages that had just been evacuated by the German rear guard.

The good woman in whose house our lieutenant was quartered told him the following story of the occupation:

The worthy old lady with a black cap on her white locks, her face lighted by the flame of the wood fire burning on the hearth, keeps up a tireless flow of anecdote, while the little granddaughter at her side listens with wide open mouth. This woman seems to me to personify the entire French race, gifted with a good share of commonsense and with intelligence not entirely devoid of malicious roguishness. In language filled with an imaginative quality she describes the departure of her three sons and her two sons-in-law—all reservists. From two of these men she has received no word since the war began, and when one speaks of them a shadow steals over her face giving it that stamp of grandeur which grief heroically borne impresses. She told me about the conversations she had with the Germans many of whom could speak French; how insufferable and naive they were in their arrogance. Then she told of their retreat and the sudden arrival at a gallop of two little chasseurs, blue as the summer sky, plain brave little chasseurs! "What a pity you are on horseback," she said. "Why, mother?" "Because I should like to kiss you." "Don't let a little thing

like that stop you," they cried, and were on the ground in a minute. "What a good kiss I gave them, monsieur; it was as if one of my own boys had come back. Then amid cheers and flowers they rode off toward the forest with a squadron of ten, on the track of the last Uhlans who had left the village two hours before. We never saw them again." Isn't that the very soul of France?

Between the Marne and the Aisne Sergeant A. H. writes to his uncle on September 26, 1914:

The retreat is over and the offensive resumed at Provins. We are twelve kilometers west of Rheims, facing the enemy's center which is making a fine resistance. Their men are fighters and they are well led. I have seen them hold their ground for hours at a stretch in the driving rain, which shows that their morale and their courage are good. Our reservists who arrived yesterday and were incorporated with the regulars have held firm under the baptism of shells and grape-shot.

On the twenty-eighth of September, 1914, J. T., a very quiet man in ordinary life, writes the following excited letter, without superscription of date or place:

Courage good—always on my feet—bullets through my coat twice—covered with the dirt

plowed up by shells—but as yet uninjured. Will tell you perhaps some day the tragic details. They are glorious and sublime. We are bearing everything with absolute confidence in our victory. Victory! That was the word on our lips when we parted at Paris. Let us repeat it, never forgetting the men who have fallen. If I don't come back you know that I shall have done my duty.

And the writer kept his word. Wounded by a bursting shell in January, he was taken to the hospital at Lyon. The wound was slight and he could write on the twenty-sixth of March:

I am going back to my place in the orchestra seats.

J. D., who has not had a chance to wash for two weeks, who sleeps on the ground, and has his ears continuously filled with the roars of cannon and musketry, declares with simplicity in a letter of September 26, 1914:

I love this life of bivouac though the stormy nights are hard. What I like most about it is being in the free air and having a feeling of unforeseen danger, the sense of uncertainty and suspense. When the cannon is still at night, I hear the groans and the death rattle of the wounded who have not been picked up in front of the trenches facing the enemy.

Our recent victories have strengthened our soldiers' confidence until now they are regular war dogs who don't interrupt their cooking when the shells rain around them—not until the pieces fall into the kettle. Still the war is hard and they are waging it against us without mercy or humanity. Quite often the Prussians dispatch our wounded soldiers with a lance thrust or a blow with the butt of a musket. I know what I'm talking about for I have seen it.

On the fifth of October, 1914, F. writes from Fouconcourt in the department of the Somme:

The horrible rain of iron and steel that hundreds of infernal machines are pouring on us every day cannot dampen our courage. It is a grand thing to fight for a holy cause like this of France. In spite of forty continuous days of battle in the Vosges and in Picardie, in spite of forty nights passed mostly in icy weather under the naked stars, in spite of hunger, rain and forced marches, and in the midst of horrors, I find myself admiring the sublime forests of the Vosges, the picturesque villages, and the gay little houses of red brick.

Another soldier writes to his parents on the seventh of October, 1914:

On reading my letter over I see that I have forgotten to tell you the best news of all. The general

in command of our Army Corps has made special mention of our Battery in the general orders and has nominated the captain for the Legion of Honor.

At the beginning of the warfare in the trenches, which the French trooper copied from the German army, J. B. was working as a digger generally during the night or in the foggy weather. On October 11, 1914, he writes:

Our intrenchments are composed of trenches for the riflemen standing up, and for machine guns flush with the ground, all connected by cross-galleries leading to sleeping quarters, to rooms for the care of the wounded, to subterranean telephone stations, to caves for provisions—in a word a whole subterranean barracks. Our "seventy-fives" are accomplishing marvels.

C. writes:

We have had a severe test in Belgium. Only 126 out of 256 are left in our company and not a single captain in the regiment. . . . For exactly twenty-one days we have been living like moles, underground, solidly intrenched on three hills, only eight or nine hundred meters from the enemy.

Lieutenant G. in a letter written to reassure his parents cannot refrain from expressing his wonder at the fairy-like spectacle presented by Autumn in the Vosges:

The woods are varicolored. A green meadow, a large white mansion with broad façade and red roof, a garden in which two roly-poly little chaps are playing, all set against the tawny and flashing golds of the forest, make an idyllic picture. One would think oneself far removed from anything like war, if it were not for the fact that two hundred meters further on one reaches a hamlet of ten or fifteen houses with but a single one standing intact. Stray hens were pecking here and there. A shutter was pounding lugubriously. A nauseating odor exhaled from the ruins, and side by side on a manure heap a cow eviscerated by a shell was staring with its empty eyes at a rooster crowing his deafening cock-a-doodle-do to the noonday sun. Life and death side by side. In other villages where there are a few houses still standing one gets the same impression. In the midst of the ruins, even under the fire of the Prussian cannons, which are beginning again to pour forth destruction, poor folks have come back to clean their houses and get in their hay. Life and death side by side! Indefatigable, like ants when their hill is destroyed, the men begin to build anew. Is it not a token of hope for the future of our fatherland?

* * * * *

There is such literary charm in these simple letters of men who frankly speak their noble thoughts,

that they seem hardly inferior to this beautiful letter of a young but well-known writer, Louis Madelin, now Captain Madelin, the historian of Danton and Fouché, and author of the history of the French Revolution, which has been recently crowned with the first grand Gobert prize by the French Academy. From Verdun, one of the gates of France which the Germans are especially anxious to break down, Captain Madelin writes on the fifth of November, 1914:

From the day when the admirable courage of the Belgians and the opportune movement of General Joffre defeated their rapid drive, the Germans' hope of victory was forever gone. Very slowly, to be sure, but very steadily our grand army is forcing them back, and our enemy's main task now is to assure a safe line of retreat. I say, "our grand army," for it is true that, after certain mistakes due to inexperience, our soldiers have become the same grand army that their fathers were, that our fathers were. They lack nothing of their mettle, their good humor, their patriotic faith, their martial spirit, and at the same time they adapt themselves wonderfully to the modern tactics, to the patient, tenacious plan of their general and chief, which requires unfailing steadfastness.

I get letters from the front [as if he were not at the front himself]. I have with the colors three brothers, two brothers-in-laws, three nephews, eighteen to nineteen years old, and these men are soldiers

of all grades in every rank of the army. They write letters fairly brimming with courage and zeal. Some of them have been wounded, but they returned as soon as possible to the firing line. One of my brothers took some Alsatian villages. He saw the colonel and five out of six of the captains of his battalion of Chasseurs fall. The youngest and sole surviving captain, he took command of what was left, led it from the Vosges to the Marne, enforced marches of forty-five kilometers a day, keeping its morale intact and losing not a single man. After fighting like a lion on the battlefield of the Marne he received his fourth galoon, richly deserved, from the hands of the general of the army corps. He wrote me a charming letter from the trenches in the North, in which he said that his soldiers (like all the rest) were accomplishing prodigies of valor. Another of my brothers, on the staff of one of the corps, dispatched with a message to a regiment of cavalry, found the regiment without colonel or major. He put himself at the head of the troops and hustled a strong force of German infantry. I have a little devil of a nephew who enlisted at the age of eighteen and five days later was sent to the front. He fought like a demon with the light infantry on the Marne and the Aisne, and when his shoulder was broken by a bursting shell he begged the doctors to heal it quickly so that he could return

to the front. Eighteen years old! There's your type of volunteer that shows what a generation we have in reserve, and with what spirit they will march to reconquer lost ground. All my life long I shall remember the first night of my command of a post in the Woevre, where I used to walk with my men, the citizens and fathers of the region, every one of them ready when called on to give his last drop of blood for the fatherland.

You know how for the last three weeks the Germans have been spreading the news that Verdun is besieged, taken, destroyed. It is one of our favorite jokes here. Whenever any one of us is going to Verdun we tell him that it is useless to start, seeing that Verdun is destroyed. But the Germans seem to make their countrymen swallow any kind of story. Yesterday I heard a German prisoner being examined in the office of the colonel to whose staff I am attached. The fellow had been before Verdun for eight weeks, and yet he stupidly persisted in his assertion that Verdun was captured. I cannot find words to express the absolute confidence of our men in the final success of our arms. Even during those terrible weeks when General Joffre tested their faith to its utmost there was no wavering. Equally indescribable are the spirit of genial comradeship and of self-sacrifice. We would all devote ourselves to death, we would even devote our young sons to death,

if thereby we could unite Alsace-Lorraine to France in six months or twelve months or sixteen months, or in any number of months. I am in the best of health and spirits.

Then follows a line in which we get a glimpse of the secret thought of one of those Frenchmen who are unjustly accused of wishing or having wished for a war of revenge, whereas in reality they were growing ever more convinced that France would never assume the responsibility before history of bringing on such a war.

I see the dream which I cherished in my childhood, but which I had begun to despair of ever seeing realized, now coming true.

* * * * *

From Morcourt in the department of the Somme on the seventh of November, 1914, F. describes the warfare of the moles:

Imagine the life that our soldiers are leading at the present moment; eight days and nights at a stretch, sometimes even more, in the trenches. And these men, who are sometimes only eighty meters distant from the Boches,[1] have to be provisioned. You see the constant danger to which our reservists

---

[1] A slang term applied to the Germans by the French soldiers in the trenches.

and even our territorials[1] are exposed. One must confess that our chasseurs are inspired with wonderful courage.

The first of November there was a sudden attack. We arrived near midnight before a village in which seven or eight houses were occupied by the enemy. We took the houses one by one by bayonet charges, by mining and by cannon. For three days and nights we stood attack after attack from the enemy. It is the most terrible conflict that I have ever seen. We made hundreds of prisoners, and picked up the wounded whom they quite generally abandoned on the field. At least four out of every ten spoke French. Many of them were not more than seventeen or eighteen years old, had seen no military service, and seemed in a state of great demoralization.

Shall we ever return? What does it matter? We march on. Some fall, others advance, and the frightful drama continues to unroll before the eyes of the dazed nations.

From day to day the troops grew more inured to war. On the fourteenth of November, 1914, Lieutenant L. G. tells this amusing story:

The Boches came to visit us, bringing a convoy

[1] A reserve force of citizens corresponding roughly to the German Landsturm.

of wagons to take away the food which we were expected to leave behind us on our retreat; the food that they took away in those same wagons consisted of corpses cut to pieces by our "seventy-fives." A week later to the day we returned their visit. But they failed to duplicate our politeness. They didn't send us back home. Truly their *Kultur* still lacks something in refinement.

Sometimes there is a touch of bitterness noticeable in the letters of the men at the front who find their exploits not quite sufficiently appreciated in the official communications.

The day before yesterday they did us the honor of sending us an official communication. We had been in a fight, had seen loaded ambulances going to the rear, had crossed woods filled with corpses and passed ravaged farms; and we said to each other, "What a battle it has been!" No wonder we were somewhat astonished to read in our official communication, "Situation unchanged in the Lorraine and in the Vosges."

On Thursday the Boches stirred a bit. They came to see what we were doing. We taught them the *pas de quatre* and we played them a pretty tune for it. They learned their lesson quickly. Two hundred of them were left on the field. It was not much and yet the official report simply announced:

"The Germans attacked our outposts between Blamont and Baccarate, and their attack was completely stopped." In reality they were thrown violently back on Blamont.

Do not imagine that the soldier is bored. He has his friends and his sweetheart.

Sweethearts! Don't be astonished. Their names are Gaby, Madelon and Sylvia. Gaby is a little person, plump, with an odor of wild cherry about her. I never spend more than ten minutes or a quarter of an hour with her. Sylvia is more slender and frail. She smells of the autumn heather and I talk with her for fifteen or twenty minutes. As for Madelon, she is a grand lady in her splendid brown dress with gold trimmings. She is very cultivated, too, and I spend twenty-five minutes or half an hour with her. Gaby, Sylvia and Madelon are—pipes. During the long anxious hours of suspense one hardly knows what to do. It is impossible to read or write, for one has to be ready to start at the first signal. So we smoke our pipes. One of my men carved Gaby for me from a branch of wild cherry. Madelon and Sylvia were presents from my subordinate officers. So much for my sweethearts. As for my friend he is a very devoted personage, very silent and always with me. He lies at my feet with his honest brown eyes fixed on me until he drops asleep. He is a

wonderful scout and guide. Moose is his name—a black and yellow water dog who got himself adopted on the tenth of September and has never left me since.

* * * * *

From time to time interesting events happen. J. F. writes from the advanced trenches on November 30, 1914, telling how the coffee, which was generally late, arrived a day in advance:

Ah, the fine surprise! It was brought by a Boche who had got lost in the fog. It was a regular godsend. We gulped down the "juice" with glee, we even gave the Boche himself some. Then two men and a corporal led him to the colonel's quarters.

After an excursus on strategy offered with a layman's modesty, Lieutenant L. turns to poetry and pens the following:

NOCTURNE.

The moon steals softly o'er the vast gray sky,
And throws along the trench its shadow lean,
Where brave men, scornful of the shrapnel, lie,
Their bed a truss of straw, their roof a screen.
Before each section lies the scanty guard,
The heights above are black with thicket walls.
Past rick and windmill looms the huge facade
Of the cathedral, dumb till vengeance calls.

AT THE FRONT

Sharp from the crest a sudden fusillade
That spreads along the front in enfilade!
The rattling musketry and whistling lead
Wake us to wait in calm restraint, until
A hidden cannon from its earthy bed
Shatters the living air—and all is still.[1]

IN THE TRENCHES, December 7, 1914.

"1914"

Within his palace sat the Emperor,
Worn thin and whetted sharp by the grim Fate
That rules the issue of this troubled age.
Hoping to banish thus his deepening gloom,
He gazed upon a map which showed the World.
Forth from his eyes there flashed a gleam of pride
As soon as he had passed his Empire's bounds.
He looked upon it all, and cried with joy—
"The World—the Universe—shall be my prey,"
But his eyes faded, and he knit his brows,
His heart was wrung with unaccustomed care.
With haughty gesture, then, he took the map,

[1] La lune glisse dans le champ du grand ciel gris,
Elle éclaire en passant le fond de la tranchée,
Où nous sommes restés méprisant les obus,
De la paille pour lit et pour toit, une claie.
Un petit poste gît devant chaque section,
Sur la crête, de noir buissons. Dans l'intervalle,
Une meule, un moulin. A droite, à l'horizon,
Muette, jusqu'au châtiment, la cathédrale. . . .

De la crête soudain part une fusillade,
Puis, gagnant tout le front des feux en enfilade,
Et chacun se redresse à leur crépitement
Les balles sifflent, claquent. Mais nous, Impassibles,
Attendons qu'un seul de nos canons invisibles
Ebranle l'air meurtri d'un long déchirement.

But, shaken through with passion, let it fall,
"The Universe," said he, "shall soon be mine,
But not until I shall have crushed forever
The legions of the Czar; while, as for England,
I'll drive her to the utmost ends of earth,
With her, Japan shall be quite blotted out,
Leaving no sign to meet my ocean path.
Austria and France had both been brought to naught,
The French seemed weary of their silent woe;
Three weeks will be enough to throttle them.
Accounts with all the rest will soon be settled,
The English and the Russians, whom we scorn,
My faithful Prussians quickly shall enslave;
My power will overtop Napoleon's,
For treacherous Albion I shall bring to earth,
And the Cossacks, the Czar thinks none can crush,
Shall serve as targets for my great Krupp guns.
The French shall find some grace in my disdain,
For 'tis my wish to rule the Universe
From Paris as my Empire's capital.
Greater than Charlemagne shall I be known,
For to the Continents, all overspread
With Germany, and bowed beneath her yoke,
America will easily be joined.
The whole round world shall have my whim for law,
And over all its races, cowed and chained,
Shall float my eagle, with its sable wings."

He spoke, and over Europe, half asleep,
Let loose the greatest cataract of blood
That History's page has e'er blushed to record.
To block the road whereby he sought his goal,
A little folk set up a scrap of paper.
He answered only: "Punish them straightway!"
But now, to the amazement of the world,
This little folk took up the gage of war,

Thus by one act keeping their plighted faith,
And strengthening the bonds of the Allies,
While Belgian soil became a Prussian grave.
In vain the Emperor poured forth his troops.
Our own, submerged a moment by their flood,
Took heart from Belgium's heroic stand,
And barred the way to Paris 'gainst the foe.
Von Kluck let slip the prize of victory,
Reft from him by the arrogant disdain
Nursed in the bosom of the Kaiser's heir.
They scarce had time to flee on every side,
Shielded by ramparts built of comrades slain.
In vain these modern Vandals spent their fury
Against the fabric of our sacred fanes.
For, as they fell, our glorious Cathedrals—
Rheims and Louvain—sounded the call to arms;
And from the foeman's guns the hail of iron
Fell impotent against a living wall.
'Mid all the bloodshed, on the rim of morning,
Appears the rising sun of Victory.
And all our souls, after our days of darkness,
Are kindled into flame by its glad rays.
For, after giving Austria her death wound,
The Russians turn to meet the Prussian foe.
The Man in White, announced of old by Prophets,
Advances, with all Russia at his back.
Beneath the first wave almost overwhelmed,
The Prussians barely make good their escape;
To meet the rising tide about his borders
The whole of William's army scarce sufficed.
But now from France the tide is mounting high;
Fleeing before this merciless array,
Which he, before, had held in such disdain,
He, known to all men as the mighty War Lord,
Sought to escape the vision of his doom,
And like a madman fled across his realm.

Then, in a little hamlet of Alsace,
Retaken by our arms, the villagers
Gathered together at the school, and stood.
A death-like silence reigned, when suddenly
Appeared before their eyes;—Oh, glorious day!—
Smiling and calm, the General in Chief,
Whose master hand had wrought for them their freedom.
Their hearts and his, all drunk with noble joy,
Melted together in a common rapture.
Then in a voice, tender as a caress,
He spoke: "Henceforth forever are ye Frenchmen!"
No more; but eloquence was never heard
Which better could express his deepest thought.
To these, so long beneath the tyrant's heel,
These simple words meant that from that day forth
They all should have the right to think free thoughts,
To live in freedom on their fathers' lands,
Freely to hail as brother every Frenchman,
And that each household very soon should see
Its scattered sons returning to the hearth.

This young and very brilliant Normalien, twenty-five years of age, was killed under the following circumstances, which are described in this letter from the director of the Ecole Normale:

June 5, 1915.

Lieutenant Leguy was designated to take command of this half-section. He knew that his mission was a hard one; but full of confidence in his men and in himself, he felt equal to his task and never ceased to repeat: "To conquer without peril is to triumph without glory." With admirable presence

of mind and calm he organized his attack, and he himself had sandbags piled up like a stairway, so as to enable the men to get out more quickly; no detail escaped him. With untiring activity he went everywhere, encouraging one, explaining to another, giving all a kind word.

At last, at 14:35 o'clock, after a violent bombardment, the charge was sounded; it was the signal for the assault. A sharp fire greets our men; the revolving cannon, the machine-guns spit without pause; shells reach our line in volleys: it is certain death for any man who shows his head above the parapet.

Lieutenant Leguy, however, climbs the slope, and calmly leaves the trench, his saber raised; his men, led by his example, follow him without hesitation, and this handful of brave men disappears in a cloud of smoke. . . .

The most part are mowed down; one of them returns, his face bloody, and falls senseless in the trench. Lieutenant Leguy also returns: he is alone; all his men have remained over there; but his mission is not fulfilled: he is not wounded and he wishes to go back. He then asks for another handful of brave men, twenty men; all those who are there raise their hands, and he sets out again with them, shouting: "Forward, my children, for France!"

The wave of bullets mows down these volunteers like the first. Leguy still remains standing with two

or three men; he marches straight towards the German trench; he sees it full of Boches; he fires his revolver at them, and encourages his men to throw bombs and grenades.

But such heroism could not obtain grace from death. After a short struggle, he fell, struck by an exploding shell. He still had the strength to drag himself to his trench, and after gathering together his failing forces to give his information to his captain, and to tell him his fear of seeing the Boches appearing on our right, he breathed his last, crying: "Vive la France!"

A comrade from Canada describes the war in the trenches in the following manner in a letter of December 20, 1914:

Your cheerful and good letter of November 18th reached me last night, and I read it over and over again, so pleased I was to get it.

I shall endeavor in this letter to give you an idea of what the war looks like as seen by "the fearless warrior" I am trying very hard to be, but let me tell you first that words fail to describe or even give a faint idea of the awfulness and horrors of the present war.

A word as to how our positions are built is necessary. For the last two months the war has been a war of intrenchments; that is, both the Germans and

the Allies have fortified themselves in deep trenches in which they are invulnerable. These intrenchments are made up of three lines of defense. In the first ones the Germans and the French are so close together that they can almost converse with each other. This has caused many funny incidents. For instance, we often read our French newspapers to the Germans telling them of their disasters, and they read theirs afterwards telling us the German story. In some places the German and French trenches are not fifty yards apart. In this position no one can rest or sleep, for they must always be ready to fight on a second's notice. It is very hard and tiring.

The second line of defense is about two hundred yards behind the first. In this position one has also to be ready on a moment's notice, but, instead of everyone watching as in the first line, sentries take their turn at guarding in shifts while the rest of the men can rest and sleep.

The third position is about a mile behind the second. There, instead of living in trenches, one lives in houses, farmhouses, etc., as far as possible, so that it is much more comfortable. It is also possible to wash, which cannot be done in the first two positions because of lack of water.

The troops in the third position are kept for a case of emergency, to reinforce the first two lines. It is there that most of the troops are kept.

In any one of the three positions one has to be always dressed, equipped, with his gun near him. It makes it very uncomfortable, as we carry a heavy load of cartridges (five hundred). I have not undressed since I arrived.

Behind the third position are located the hospitals and the auxiliary services.

The first two positions are made up of trenches built in three units. The first one is the trench itself, from which one can shoot and direct his fire against the enemy. It is open, about six feet deep and three feet wide. One shoots behind the protection of what we call in French *crénaux*, and is thus well protected from the enemy's bullets. In the forward wall of this trench are doors conducting by stairs to deep cellars, built eighteen feet below the surface of the earth. In these cellars the soldiers take refuge when under bombardment from the enemy's guns, and they are absolutely immune from the danger of the *colossal* explosions of the Germans' monstrous obuses. These cellars are only in the second and third positions, as the Germans cannot bombard our first position, which is so close to theirs that they would risk bombarding their own.

Behind the firing trench are located shacks, houses built of straw, mud and timber, the roofs of which are at the earth's level. In these we live, sleep and rest. We do not live in the cellars, because it would

be too insanitary, and it would take too long to get out of them in case of an attack, when seconds are worth hours.

The intrenchments are not built in a straight line but in a broken line, so as to minimize the effect of an obus falling into any part of the entrenchment. It only kills a few men, whereas it would clean out a whole trench built in a straight line, with nothing to stop its force.

It is useless to say that living in these shacks and cellars is most uncomfortable. When it rains, which happens often, they are filled with water and mud; we cannot make any fire for fear of showing our position to the enemy, and our food, which is cooked at the third line, is cold when it reaches us, after having traveled a mile or two in the open air.

If you add to this that we never wash, that we are covered with mud and dirt, that we are always under great nervous tension, that we hardly sleep, you will understand that after a week of this life we are thoroughly exhausted. We then get four days' rest at the third line, which is of great benefit to our health.

A word now as to the region in which these tragic events take place. It is in the North of France, in vast plains where most of the French wheat is grown, flat, without trees, offering no shelter whatever, and desolated with no horizon. To anyone

approaching our battlefield, nothing particular is to be noticed, except that this year the fields are not cultivated and seem to be full of big holes; but no sight of guns, soldiers, trenches; everything is under the earth and cannot be seen even at ten yards' distance.

Being located near the sea, the plains are very misty and damp. It rains eight days out of ten, and although it is not very cold, we suffer very much from the humidity in the atmosphere. During the nights it is usually very dark.

The struggle consists mostly in never-ending artillery duels. All day long and during the night one hears only the booming of guns, which shake the air and the earth. I must say that as far as the Germans are concerned, they seem to be very poor shooters. I have been in the second position for the last six days. They are sending us a copious lot of obuses and shrapnel all the time, and although many of my comrades, as well as myself, have had many close escapes from death, they do not succeed in killing more than two or three men a day, and wounding as many. And yet firing so many big obuses must cost them millions every day.

It is under the cover of dark nights that the infantry, both French and German, make their attacks. The worst one I have seen took place about a week after I had arrived at the front.

On that day the weather had been very windy and unsettled all day long. We had been bombarded very hard by the Germans. When night came, both the wind and the cannonade had abated. About nine P.M. I took my turn as our advanced sentry in front of the trenches of the second position. Just imagine a night as black as ink, a night worthy of Dante's Inferno, full of mystery from which the worst could be expected. One thing struck me when I took my post. Usually one could see during the night flashes of light, the explosion of obuses, the white light of electric projectors or the luminous fuses sent up by the Germans into the air, to enable them to discover the French patrols. It was like the most spectacular exhibition of fireworks. But on that night there was no light to be seen, nor were the guns booming. I perceived also in the sky what looked like a star, but grew brighter and dimmer and moved from left to right, as if making signals. This turned out to be a captive balloon.

I thought this strange and unusual, and went to inform my lieutenant of what was going on. The lieutenant doubled the number of sentries, and advised us to keep a sharp look-out, as he thought the Germans were preparing some bad coup, and indeed they were.

I resumed my position, walking slowly up and down, trying very hard to see something in the dark night,

but I could not see much. I could not help thinking, and this thought would insistently come back to me, that I was an actor playing the part of some hero in some dark drama like "La Tosca." My mind was busy amusing itself with this and other thoughts, when all of a sudden, without the least previous notice, a hideous light illuminated the horizon, and before I could catch my breath a hail of obuses fell on our trenches, working terrible havoc. The explosion shook my body, surrounding me with flames and fire, while I could hear in the far distance the noise of an intense fusillade and terrifying shouts and cries, such as would come from a crowd of wild men. The Germans had gone to the assault of our first position.

It was so sudden, so spectacular, so impressive that for a while, to use a vulgar expression, "I was scared stiff," and could not move. Then, moved by instinct, I ran to the trenches and made a general call to arms, and went to knock at the door of our commander's shack, calling him out, telling him of what had happened. By that time great excitement was prevailing in the trenches, the men were coming out of their shacks, seeking the position each one had to occupy in case of an attack. Officers were shouting orders that were unheard, while obuses were falling fast, making a thundering noise, and making worse the horrors of the night. Some men got

wounded. Some got buried in the earth and mud thrown up by the explosions of obuses near about. After a while order was restored in the trenches, everyone occupying his position, ready to fight, huddling in the bottom of the trenches so as not to be hurt by the explosions of obuses, which were becoming more and more frequent, and by the storm of bullets passing over our heads.

In the distance we could hear the echo of a terrible struggle between the Germans and our men of the first position. From the darkness of the night came the voice of our commander, "My boys, we shall have to go forward to the assistance of our comrades of the first line. I expect everyone to do his duty. Everyone shall go forward at my order." In answer the German artillery seemed to redouble the bombardment. There must have been at least six batteries spitting death and fire upon the short zone separating the second from the first position—this to prevent us from going forward to reinforce our first position.

Then came the order, "Forward." The field in front of our trenches looked like an ocean. Under the effect of the terrific explosions from the German obuses, the earth was torn up and seemed to form waves of mud and dust, real waves with white caps of fine earth that was blown into our eyes and ears. The explosions were making a kind of artificial light

that was hideous, making things look unnatural and deformed, outlining their shapes as in a nightmare.

The men hesitated. To leave their shelter in the trenches looked like sure and instant death. As far as I am concerned, never before had the sentiment of the irremediable hopelessness of my case been so impressed upon me. I thought my last hour had come. At the price of a great effort I regained my composure. Men were leaving the trenches, crawling upon the ground, and I started also to go forward.

The ground was soaked from the rain of the previous days. We had not crawled forward ten feet before our clothes were wet through, and then it was such hard work crawling upon the ground full of holes, with the great weight we had to carry with us, that I was soon in a great state of perspiration. I could not tell whether the water or the perspiration drenched me most. I reached the barbed wire defense of our position, and going through I scratched my hands, which were bleeding and hurting me much. At times the wind would blow and I would shiver from the cold; and all the time I would hear obuses whistling through the air. Every time I heard one the question would present itself to my mind, "Where will it strike the ground?" Several times they struck so near me that I was buried under the showers of earth. The noise of

the explosions made my ears bleed. I noticed that obuses very seldom struck the ground twice in the same place, so I followed the plan of hiding myself in the holes formed by the one just exploded, then I would run to the next one and thus go forward.

We had not made half of the distance when the news came that the Germans had pierced our first lines, and our men were retreating, disputing every foot of the ground. We could see the struggle and the Germans coming upon us.

Then the order came that we should also retreat and go back to our trenches of the second position, as we would make a better stand there against the Germans, while reinforcements were coming to our help.

And so we did. At the price of great pain and sufferings, and always under steady bombardment, we took our position behind the crénaux waiting for the worst. It was not twenty-five minutes since the attack had started. I was feeling much better, although shivering from the cold, my clothes being all wet through, my face and hands being covered with mud, which also filled my eyes and ears.

Suddenly we heard a great noise behind us, a noise of chains, irons, wheels, of horses pulling hard and in great number, and of swearing, hurrying men. Before we had time to realize what had happened,

a thunderbolt rent the air. We could feel the heat of it. A deafening roaring shook the earth, while the displacement of air was so great that we were thrown against the forward wall of the trenches. One of our famous "75" batteries had just arrived upon the ground and had started to make the Boches (name by which we call the Germans) dance!

Oh, how I wish you had been there! It was most wonderful. I had heard a great deal about the superiority of the French artillery, but the most eulogistic compliments are not enough to tell the truth. Within ten minutes, one single French battery had silenced the six German batteries, and with such a maestria!! The German obuses are certainly very redoubtable, they make a terrific noise and work destruction; but ours! It is frightful. They explode dryly, brutally, as if with anger. They seem hardly to have left the mouth of the gun when they explode with a dry quick effect, and for five minutes one can hear the débris they have created falling down upon the ground.

One can hear the German obuses coming and whistling through the air for thirty seconds. Ours seem to get there ten times as quickly, and to go straight to their objective.

To make a long story short, after it had silenced the enemy's guns, our battery directed its fire against the German trenches with remarkable effect.

By that time a battalion of chasseurs, who are the best men of our infantry, had also arrived upon the scene. They made a wonderful *charge à la bayonette* and drove the Germans back to their trenches, making many prisoners. The next day when we buried the dead, there were three thousand Germans and our loss was but two hundred. Such a disparity in losses is accounted for by the fact that they had to swamp our first line of intrenchment to get through.

I was told the next day by a man who was in the first line that it was a question of shooting fast enough to kill them all! The Germans came to the assault of our first line in such great numbers that our men did not have time enough to shoot and kill them all, and thus were finally swamped.

The whole attack lasted about an hour. After it was over our artillery bombarded the German intrenchments for over an hour, causing them, no doubt, further losses.

I had to resume my function as a sentry until eleven P.M., but I enjoyed it, I assure you, watching our big obuses fly through the air, and witnessing the destruction they made.

When I went to bed—of course there is no bed—I was so exhausted by the terrible moments I had lived through, that I hardly took the time to take off my wet clothes.

I rolled myself into a blanket and fell upon the

earth of our shack in a slumber so deep that nothing could have awakened me.

Since then I have been in three more attacks, so I am getting used to it now and hold my own better. However, I shall never forget those anxious moments of the first attack.

* * * * *

Letter of First Lieutenant B. of the Alpine Chasseurs, describing his first battle. He was but twenty-one years of age. He has since been killed in Alsace after having obtained two mentions in the Orders of the Division and the Army for his bravery.

My very dear Mother:

You must have been much surprised latterly to have had so little news of me. Now that the storm is over, I can tell you that I spent five days within thirty meters of Mm. les Boches and that this proximity prevented my sending you any news. Here is what happened: On the sixteenth we found ourselves in the trenches of the third line, eight hundred meters from the Boches. The Major assembles the company commanders; Lieutenant M. returns and taking me by the arm, leads me up a little slope, indicating a wooded ridge about four hundred meters away, and says to me: "The battalion is ordered to take that ridge; the third and fourth companies will attack. The affair is for tomorrow afternoon."

At that moment I had a chill, and all day my heart was troubled. I prayed as I had never prayed before in my life, and in the evening my courage had come back. I slept all night. The next morning we were to be in the trench ready to move at half-past eleven; we ate rapidly and at five minutes before eleven I started to assemble my company.

All the men were together and we were about to start, when directly over our heads an enormous bomb exploded, then a second and then a third. The Boches had found our point of assembly and were giving us a heavy bombardment. The men showing some nervousness I brought them back under shelter; then turning about I found M. deadly pale, and he said to me: "I am wounded in the leg; take the company to the point of departure for the attack and report to the Major." I can assure you that at this moment I did not feel very heroic. Outside the bombs were exploding with a horrible noise, and the moment of attack was approaching. I marched my men along and halted them in a place of shelter. I then went to find the Major and reported to him. He said: "You are in luck to find yourself at the very outset commander of a company; to be acting captain at your age is splendid." I answered: "Major, I am not sufficiently experienced; I beg you give me a company commander." He replied: "Come, come, a little courage, you will see it is not difficult. The

signal for the attack will be given you by Lieutenant S."

I could but obey. I advanced the men as far forward as possible in the trench, and passed the word that I was taking command of the company.

The French artillery was firing on the ridge which we were to attack. It was a fantastic sight. The 220's went whistling over our heads and exploding over the Boche trenches within a hundred meters of us, making a horrible noise and thick black smoke. At half-past one the 75's began to fire. Two thousand bombs were thrown against the Boche position. It was an infernal din; uprooted saplings were carried a hundred meters away and thick smoke covered everything.

Our machine guns began to take part. Suddenly the voice of Lieutenant S. called: "Ready! Third Company, forward!" Without a moment's pause I sprang out of the trench, shouting: "Come on, boys, forward!" The 75's had then increased their range. All the men followed me, and shouting, we scrambled forward at double time towards the Boche trench. I had my revolver in my hand. In the heat of the attack, I had distanced all my "*poilus*" and found myself thirty meters ahead of them. Suddenly, I saw a mound. It was the Boche trench, and at the same moment a bullet whistled by my ear. I leaped forward and I find a Boche, his gun still smoking in his

hand, with the Red Cross brassard on his arm; he drops on his knees, crying, "*Pardon, kamarad,*" and showing me his brassard, says: "*Sanität, sanität*". [Hospital Corps.] I go on with my men. We pass over the ridge, and we stop at two hundred meters from the crest as I had been ordered to do. The Boches were bolting on every side. Our artillery fire had so demoralized them that they had abandoned everything. We occupied all the Boche positions, picking up quantities of material, guns, machine-guns, tools; here and there dead Boches blotted the landscape.

But it was no time to jest. I get my men together and tell them: "Get to work and dig a trench there." I was astonished to find myself so calm. In front of us fifty chasseurs guarded the construction of our trench. Up to that moment I had had one man killed and twenty wounded. Suddenly, right in front of us a violent fusillade began; bullets whistled on all sides, and I saw the "*poilus*" ahead of me return, calling, "Lieutenant, they are coming." It was the counter-attack. We jump into the trench scarcely yet outlined, and I command the men to fire. Two hundred meters from me I see the Boches coming in masses, shouting; I even heard the cry "*Vorwärts, vorwärts!*" All of my men begin to fire; the fusillade resounds; the Boches, throwing themselves on the ground, return our fire; thousands of bullets go whist-

ling by our ears, but I pay no attention. Suddenly the Boches rise and continue to advance; we continue to fire; the Boches, in panic, run away at full speed, leaving behind them quantities of dead and wounded.

My men continue to work at the trench. I have them place in front of the trench a barricade of barbed wire taken from the Boches, and we spend the first night there. Note that I had with me only a sergeant. I did not feel very big. The Major had sent me a note in which he warmly congratulated me, and expressly forbade me to give up the position. I think that all my life I shall remember that night. The Boches were constantly firing on us, while digging their own trench sixty meters from us. My men were on edge and I had a hard time to keep them from firing. In the night the Boches came again, but again were quickly repulsed. What a night! Frightfully damp, a flurry of snow and terrible cold, and overhead the sounds of the whistling bullets mingled with the strokes of the spades and picks of the Boches. The whole thing was impressive.

Daylight came, and with it a frightful fusillade from the Boches. One of my men was killed; another wounded. I had in all ten killed and some thirty wounded. We kept on working at our trench and connected it with the trench of the neighboring company. During the morning someone comes through a connecting trench telling me that the Major wished

to speak to me. I arrive at his headquarters. He shakes my hand, saying: "My boy, I am going to see what I can do for you; but I promise you, anyhow, to have you mentioned in the Orders for the Day, which will give you a right to the *Croix de Guerre*," and he adds: "All the officers of the battalion admired the way that you conducted yourself during the attack, and I am happy to congratulate you."

You can imagine if I was excited! I assure you that it is easy to do one's duty, and I was not at all expecting to be congratulated. All the officers came to shake my hand. I felt covered with confusion.

Now for something else. We spent the next four nights in the trench, and this morning I had my feet swollen and hurting horribly. I went to the relief station, where they found that my left foot was frozen, and my right was frost-bitten. They sent me to the rear, to a village, three kilometers away. I shall be here, it seems, for eight days.

You see, dear mamma, everything went well. It was surely your thoughts and your prayers that watched over me, and kept away the bullets. You can say that your son did his duty as best he could, and if I am happy to be named in the *Ordre du Jour* it is principally because of the pleasure that you, as well as papa, will feel.

The battalion is now going to be relieved. I hope

that my frost-bite will be cured when it goes on duty again.

EXTRACTS FROM THE OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUES

1. In Alsace, we have taken the ridges which command the "Sudel" farm, and we have held all the ground taken.

2. In Alsace, further details inform us that the south ridge of the "Sudel" farm, taken by us on Wednesday, constituted a formidably equipped redoubt. We took there one bomb thrower, five machine-guns, some hundred rifles, shields, bombs, tools, and rolls of wire; telephone apparatus, thousands of cartridges and some sand bags.

* * * * *

Here is another picture of the front, a picture of Christmas day, the anniversary of Him who said, "Peace on earth, good-will to men." A young theological student in the ranks writes:

December 25, 1914.

I do not know how this day has passed with you, but here it has been somewhat sad; the nostalgic temperament of our Celts [he is a Breton among Breton soldiers] has got the upper hand to-day. Our cannons might thunder as they would and our mortars vomit their fire, all the noise failed to waken

our soldiers from their dreams. They were all thinking of their dear ones left behind in the gray, sweet Armorican country. They were living over again the happy Christmas days of the past, the midnight masses celebrated with such warmth and spirit in spite of rain or snow, the return home to where the huge log was flaming on the hearth, the gay awakening in the morning, and the joy of the children when they found that the little Jesus had visited their wooden shoes. All of this has been like an uneasy troubled dream. Still the Christmas Eve was beautiful. The rain had stopped and dry weather came on. The sky was sown with stars and the ground covered with hoar frost. At midnight the German soldiers sang in the trenches. One of our lieutenants stood up and sang, "Minuit, Chrétiens." Our Bretons chanted their Christmas carols in the rude sweet tongue of Armorica, "Tarram Mandeleck" "Sing Noel." After the singing one of the Germans came out of the trenches with a lantern in one hand and a box in the other, shouting, "Don't shoot, comrades, cigar—cigarette." He came halfway to our line and stopped. One of our officers replied that we were well supplied with cigars and cigarettes and that he might make other use of them. He returned to his trench and a little later the firing began.

Don't be downcast thinking of us in the snow and rain, it's all part of the game. War is a test of

character like others, and nations need suffering to keep them from the thoughtless life that lets the day slide by in ease. We know what it is to suffer here, but if we know how to bear the suffering, to receive it as God wills, we shall come out the stronger for it, tempered the better to meet all the tests of life. And if we must come to the supreme test to give our lives for France, believe me, not one of us will hesitate a moment. For myself since the beginning of the war I have held my life cheap; they call me reckless, but until now I have not received the slightest scratch. Perhaps God doesn't want me yet, but if death is to come my prayer is, "Thy will, not mine, be done."

Don't reproach yourself that you are too happy. You have a good soul and are doing others good. God made you that way, you should thank Him for it. You may rest assured that I do not forget you in my prayers, and I ask you, too, when you kneel at the altar to think of me and commend me to our Saviour, that He may make your friend, the little corporal, a willing victim if he is destined to die and a good priest if he is destined to live.

* * * * *

A French jurisconsulte who has recently published an article in the *Revue Générale de Droit International Public* on Anglo-American arbitra-

tion, is now on the firing line. With his great technical competence and with the moderation and solidity of character which is well known to all his friends and to specialists in his subject in every country, he writes under the date of May 4, 1915:

At the front we certainly feel that we are in danger. We hear the rifle bullets whistling and sometimes we are spattered with mud from the bursting shells, and even if we are called on to do little in reply, all that has a moral value. Still it is sad to have infinitely less asked of you than you could do. Think of it, for more than a month I have been helping build roads. My men work hard, but my own rôle is at present almost nil. Formerly I worked on fortifications. It was more dangerous, but much more of a military job, and I felt that my labor was much more useful.

All this is enlarging the foundations of my experience and jurisprudence and I think that my next course on the Rights of War will be one of unusual originality (if the German rascals allow me to give it). You know what reorganization of the material will be necessary. You know also how little regard the German military leaders have for the rights of nations or for the conventions signed by their government. I had an example of it the other day. The little town in which I am staying (I can't tell you the name of it) was bombarded.

Perhaps the Germans thought that they had good military reasons for the bombardment, but in defiance of Article 26 of the Regulations of The Hague they did not give any previous notice of bombardment. The noncombatant population, surprised by the rain of shells, had no time to seek refuge. The effect of the bombardment was almost nil. An old man of seventy and a soldier were killed, one or two others wounded, some pieces of masonry knocked down, and holes plowed up in the air. But in spite of these slight results, it was deplorable as an example of the brutal method of the Germans in attacking without warning and in direct defiance of the international agreement which they made.

These are facts which the jurists ought never to forget. I am collecting only those of which I have been the witness, knowing how careful one must be in accepting testimony. Well, I have in my pocket incendiary pastilles of the Boches, bags of which were found everywhere after the Battle of the Marne, and I also have seen a German bullet with the end cut into a cross with a very neat incision so as to make it into a dum-dum ball.

The war lengthens, but the morale of our troops is unimpaired:

Those who return from the war will be so sick of it that they will never fight again. I speak of

the Germans, for as to Frenchmen, liberty will always find plenty of defenders. They (the Germans) have left thousands of corpses on our line of march in Champagne, corpses mutilated in every fashion, arms, heads, remnants of human bodies, lie scattered about unburied, and those that are buried are so near the surface that the shells dig them up again.

Still the morale of our men is good. When the moment for attack comes, young and old rush forward like tigers. When the battle is over they come back "all in," and two hours later you would find it hard to believe that these men who passed you nonchalantly with their pipe between their lips have so lately been heroes. Their conversation is typical: no fine phrases, no lyric passages, no boasting; their language is the simplest form of expression filled with common slang and diminutives; and this is true of men of all classes of society.

Yesterday a comrade whom I had lost sight of since December, met me. He is thirty-eight years old and married. I asked him for news of this or that captain. "Killed," he said of one. "I saw him blown into the air in bits," he said of another. "He was plucked by rifle ball," of another. Of another, "He's gone dippy." "And you, my friend?" said I. "Oh, the humming-birds [bullets] don't find me attractive enough to light on."

The man who would start to discourse on the jus-

tice of our cause in fine language would be sent to the devil. We don't think about that any more. We have got used to living out of doors, to being exposed. Our bodies are accustomed to it, and our minds, after vainly seeking to estimate the duration of hostilities have grown resigned. When we get orders to move, we move without a word. We are equally confident of victory whether time or action is to decide the issue of the war.

All said and done our morale is on a par with our task. We have bent to the task partly through necessity, partly by intuition. In either case it spells victory.

A letter of June 24, 1915, from an artillery man tells how the enemy's trenches are taken:

We are very busy at this moment. My poor captain spent last night (the fifth in succession) out of doors. He has not been at the cantonment since the eighteenth. As for me, it's the same old jig, as we say in military slang. We live a queer kind of life. Take yesterday for example; at six in the morning everybody was sleeping soundly in the safe shelter of the trenches, in spite of the firing nearly all night. At nine o'clock the whistles sounded, everybody was routed out and the firing began, with intervals of three to ten minutes between shots. This irregular fire is harder to conduct, but

it is very effective in demoralizing the enemy. The shots now coming close on each other's heels, now separated by several minutes, keep the whole zone demoralized.

The difficulty in this irregular fire lies in the fact that the irregularity is deliberate, and the men pointing the guns have to be ready at any moment to sight the exact spot that the commander of the battery wants to reach. It's tiresome because we are all keyed up from the commander down. The slow firing lasts sometimes for two hours at a stretch.

At half-past eleven it began to rain. We all listened to the patter of it in our shelter. At noon we were eating our soup when all of a sudden the orders came and ninety shells were dispatched into the enemy's lines to paralyze an attack which had already begun. The attack ceased and we went on with our soup.

Then we worked at the screens and the observatory. At three o'clock we were allowed some sleep. At six soup arrived, but with it an order to meet an infantry attack. We fired one hundred and twenty shells at regular intervals. A shot every ten seconds from each battery. The shells fell in the trenches as though dropped from a spoon and tore them badly. Three cannons of Battery 155 were trained on a blockhouse, which soon disappeared from view in a cyclone of fire and dust. Then we extended

the fire and formed a barricade of cannon, under the protection of which the soldiers sprang forward, not one of them falling. One hundred, two hundred, three hundred meters and they were at the Boches' trench and the blockhouse. A bewildering scrimmage, and half the men came back dragging some gray bundles of rags, which we recognized as prisoners. Later we heard that we had taken two trenches and two forts with seventy-five prisoners. The German trenches were filled with corpses, swimming in blood and mud.

The firing was continued until eleven o'clock in the evening in order to prevent a counter-attack, but in order to save ammunition we fired only one shot every three minutes for the whole battery. Everything was calm and we were sleeping when at one o'clock in the morning the counter-attack came. It lasted twenty minutes and the Boches withdrew, leaving a number of corpses on the field as a result of the storm that they had the impudence to draw down on themselves. We went back to bed and slept peacefully until eight o'clock. Finally the relieving party came and we got back to the cantonment for a breathing space.

You can understand that in this kind of life we don't have much time for anything. Firing, working on the intrenchments, eating, sleeping, these are our main occupations, with a little washing and writing

on the side. We hardly have time to think, for our whole being is totally fixed on the single end of victory. And it seems as if our end were reached. The Boches are melting away under our fire, for they will be massacred, but will not surrender. Above the aviators are flying incessantly, hindering any rush of the enemy on our position and keeping us informed of his position all the time. We have sometimes six aviators in the air to one German who hovers at a distance, not daring to advance in the face of such superiority. At that there is almost nothing going on in our section. It is on the left that the real action is taking place.

Louis G.

* * * * *

THE NATIONAL HOLIDAY AT THE FRONT

A card from M. L., July 14, 1915:

We have all the rain that you could want in the sky and all the water you could want in the trenches. It's the regular fourteenth of July wetting. There's nothing extraordinary to report—we are beginning to live the peaceful life since the attacks of Q. We have the cannons to amuse us in the daytime, and the fuses to light us up at night, and with all comfortable apartments underground. What more could we ask to make us happy?

A card from A. H.:

The action is lively in our region. The Crown Prince sees that even if Verdun is not far away, the road to it is utterly impossible to take. Let us hope that he will be convinced of it before long.

* * * * *

And the commanders? Here is one of them sketched in a lively fashion in the letter of a young officer, L. G., lieutenant of reserves:

The general of our army corps has just made an address to us. He is a tall, thin man, with an alert expression, a round head on a long neck, short hair, black but grizzled, a clear bright eye under dark lashes and a prominent forehead. His nose is straight above a heavy gray mustache, his jaw is square and firm. In very simple words, he told us the lessons he had learned from these seven months of war. He spoke of the intoxication of victory, and said that when two combatants faced each other in a mortal conflict, both nearly spent with exhaustion, the man who could hold out an hour longer was sure of the victory, and this crucial hour, he said, depended neither on munitions nor arms, but on the moral factor alone. And the morale depended on the officers. "Be optimistic," he said, "before everything and in spite of everything." He told us of an engagement in which his division alone stood

the attack of five brigades (two and a half divisions), which threw themselves on him one after the other. That his men were able successfully to repel this attack, which lasted five days and five nights, with the opportunity of only two hours' rest a night, was due entirely to their morale.

He gave us a solid basis for our optimism too. "Joffre will conquer when he wills and where he wills, but he wants the victory to cost as little as possible."

It was a fine lesson that he gave us.

* * * * *

And the men? A Frenchwoman writes on the eleventh of August, 1914, after the furloughs were granted to the men at the front:

The children are playing with their little friends De B. under the surveillance of the orderly of Monsieur de B., who fell in one of the first battles. The orderly is a brave soldier from the North of France who cannot pass his leave of absence at home because the Boches are occupying his town, so he has come to spend it with these children of Monsieur de B., to whom he is devoted. He wrote during the winter to Madame de B.: "I have done my duty to the utmost. I am sure that my general is watching me from above and in doing my duty I am still obeying him."

II

IN THE HOSPITAL

II

IN THE HOSPITAL

A SOLDIER writes to his aunt in Washington, October 15, 1914:

I am writing from the house of the Sisters of Compassion, where the wounded are cared for. Perhaps you don't know that I was wounded. For more than a month I was at Grenoble, where my regiment was charged with the defense of a section against a possible attack from the Italians.[1] I must confess that it seems rather ridiculous to me to protect a city that no one had any intention of attacking. A ministerial circular called for the names of territorial officers who wished to join the active regiments. I had my name inscribed. I fought in the Department of the Somme. On the morning of the twenty-fifth of September in less than an hour's time I was thrown into the thick of the conflict in

[1] The letter was written early in the war when it was by no means certain that Italy would not be held by the terms of the Triple Alliance to fight on the side of Germany and Austria-Hungary.

the first rank, and for my baptism of fire was exposed to a perfect rain of bullets and shells. I was far less disturbed than I feared I should be, and I explain it that on account of being an officer I had my men to look after. I had about two hundred under my orders, for the lack of captains set me in command of the whole company. We had to fight all the following day too and that night repulsed a counter-attack by the Germans. Four nights in succession we slept in the trenches or in ditches. In spite of counter-attacks and continuous firing we fell asleep as soon as we had a few free moments. I have a rank which will waken all the strength in me if affairs get worse. My insomnia of the old days is completely gone.

In spite of our hardships great and small, everybody is happy, full of enthusiasm, and pledged in word and deed to the destruction of our enemies. Wonderful spirit which lasts under fire for days and days!

You've heard of their marmites: there are two sorts of them. One kind produces a whirlwind of white smoke when it bursts at an altitude of about twenty-five meters. They are not very terrifying, but the other kind, much larger, burst often at the level of the ground with a horrible effect, emitting a cloud of yellowish smoke. Both of them sound like rattling iron. You'd think they were coming at you

on a curtain rod. With a little experience you know whether these shells are headed straight for you or not. And you can even tell when they are headed for you whether they will explode near you or far off. It furnishes us with a nice little game of wager.

The twenty-eighth of September, at half-past two in the morning, a villainous shell of the yellow variety burst over our trenches less than a yard away. As several shells had preceded this one, we were all waiting in the proper position, huddled together as much as possible in the trench, our heads protected by a sack—like many of the officers I had a Tyrolese sack. The noise of the bursting shell was so frightful that I thought I was cut in pieces. I found out later this is the common experience of men when a shell bursts near them. My part in the explosion was six wounds, viz., a piece of shell in my left leg, three pieces in my left thigh, a piece in my back, and a shrapnel bullet just above the left knee. I was carried by my devoted soldiers to the ambulance more than four kilometers away, was treated and then taken to the train. We were stopped at Montdidier. I was losing a great deal of blood and almost at the fainting point. I stayed in the ambulance from September 28 to October 7. When I reached Rouen I had a fever and could not move. But here I am in a first-class clinic, scientifically and tenderly cared for.

On November 15, 1914, from the Schneider Hospital, far back of Laval, a brother writes his Odyssey from the city of Romans to the Vosges with the Alpine chasseurs:

My fortune was to stay for seventy hours in a trench. Twenty-four hours of the time in the rain. During the last afternoon we counted eight hundred shells, and the strange thing about it was that after such a pelting we had only one slightly wounded man. That day, the tip end of a bursting shell weighing about a pound fell just at my feet. I kept it for a while in my kit-bag, but had to throw it away on a forced march one day to lighten my load. I have had at various times a number of trophies taken on the firing line: German helmets, grenadier cloaks, belts, guns, cartridges and so forth. But I have dropped them all along the march rather than carry them further. At Etial alone we found enough material to equip five hundred men. There was a pyramid of helmets and new shoes in front of the church. We gave the shoes to the townsmen. Our company was the first to enter Etial on the heels of the retreating Prussians; and I had the satisfaction of tearing down with my own hands the placard bordered with the German colors which threatened with death anyone who annoyed the German soldiers or removed that notice.

But to return to the Vosges. After the glorious

Battle of the Marne the Germans retreated in haste toward the frontier. Our hussars and chasseurs kept only twenty-five or thirty kilometers behind them all the way. The Germans on this retreat left an enormous quantity of munitions behind them, and the stragglers were made prisoners. One day while we were halting by the roadside we saw two African chasseurs bringing in two German prisoners. One of them smiled and gave us the military salute. When they reached the tent company all of a sudden I saw a French soldier dart out into the street, throw both arms around this prisoner and kiss him on both cheeks. It was his Alsatian brother who had been drafted into the German army. . . .

We have gone into action northeast of Rosieres in the Department of the Somme. We are in the midst of great fields of beets in the Picardy plains. We had to march under fire from enormous German guns which were beyond the range of our cannon. The 22nd Regiment was a little ahead of the rest to the right, when the Germans tried to turn us on the left. It was a terrible moment; shells from one hundred and twenty guns bursting over our heads, bullets from the front and the left, and in case we gave way, the 22nd Regiment would be cut off and our artillery exposed. We lay down flat on the ground, and while in this position I was struck by a bullet. I threw away my knapsack and leaning on my gun,

crawled eight or nine hundred meters to find a stretcher. If I met the soldier who gave me that bullet I would salute him, for he was doing his duty. In their rage at having to retreat they devastated the region through which they passed with incredible ferocity. I have no reproaches to make against the Germans on the field of battle, but in their treatment of our eastern and northern country they have forever covered the name of Germany with disgrace.

A soldier writes from the Grand Palais the following undated letter:

I have had four serious wounds and two accidents. My left shoulder has been dislocated and my right arm broken. I lay on the ground all night long absolutely unconscious and losing a great deal of blood. I do not yet know how I came to. We were fighting like lions, we Zouaves of Tunis. Within three hours we had made seven bayonet charges. Dirty, unshaven, covered with mud, our white trousers spattered with blood, we were handsome all the same. For we had made these German barbarians see the worth of the African soldiers, whom they called "savages." We hated to retreat, but we were proud to check their advance as we did. I was about to be advanced to a lieutenancy when I was wounded.

Can soldiers who advance against us as they did

over the bridges of the Sambre behind Belgian women and children as screens, still claim to belong to the civilized world?

Well, I want that gold lieutenant stripe and I'm going back to get it at the point of the bayonet. I shall be proud to give a little more of my blood and even my life, and with what joy, if I can only help in punishing these barbarians!

P. L.

* * * * *

As soon as they are in the hospital, however welcome the rest, the one thought of the men is to get well enough to join their regiments. J. T. writes from Lyons on March 26, 1915:

I am starting for my depot and from there I shall go to the front. I was wounded a second time in the leg, as you know. The wound was quite slight, but I have been very sick. My strength has come back now completely and I have vanquished the acute attack of bronchitis which I caught the day I was wounded. I spent the following night on the battlefield.

So I am well again and going back to my place in the orchestra. I hope this time to be in the grand celebration. Are we downhearted? No! No! Doubtless I shall be assigned to some new regiment,

and therefore I cannot give you my exact address on the eve of my departure.

My days at Lyons have been melancholy ones. The enforced repose of a long convalescence far from the active scenes at the front has worn on my nerves, but I got new energy the day I learned that my return to the colors had been finally sanctioned.

Spring is coming. The trees are getting green and already the last white gulls have left the banks of the Rhone in their flight to Switzerland. One could easily yield to the emotion created by the poetry of nature if the thought of one's friends fighting there at the front did not come to recall one to the tragic but glorious reality.

Good-bye, I am returning to the fight filled with new courage and new ardor. Good-bye, more heartily than ever I say—till after the victory.

* * * * *

What word from those who nursed the wounded? This from Lyons, from a hospital in which the great surgeon Ollier worked once, and in which the great surgeon Carrel has been working later:

The Americans would be still more strongly devoted to the cause of the Allies if they really knew how the Germans are conducting this war. I was astounded to see how the land for whose scholars

I have the greatest admiration can reconcile its wonderful intellectual developments with a morality worthy only of the most degraded barbarians. It is certainly proven that intellectual and moral development do not go hand in hand; still it is surprising to see how a race that has produced such admirable characters as Emil Fischer, Ehrlich and so many others can remain morally at the level of the brutes of the Stone Age. It is almost incredible. It shows us that the Kultur which the German professes to mediate to the world is only worth throwing away like a rotten apple. I earnestly hope that with Europe torn to pieces the United States will grow rapidly enough to direct the evolution of the world toward an ideal which shall satisfy not only our intellectual and scientific demands, but our moral aspirations as well.

The author of these lines could not stay at Lyons; he went to the front bearing a message to general headquarters in a region where the shells were still falling.

Here the men who are really in touch with the war behave admirably. The old valor of the race comes out. One would think them the resurrected soldiers of the Grand Army. I hope that the younger generation will come out of this war completely virilized.

A little later he writes from Compiègne, a short distance from the enemy:

Never have I had the opportunity of meeting men of such varied types under conditions which brought out their characters so sharply. Under such circumstances as these, one learns to appreciate the real value of men, and it seems to me more and more true that mere intellectual development is a very insignificant part of an individual's life.

Just now my life is very interesting and not a little difficult because of the number of rôles I have to play at the same time. I have to be director of an organization which must function in actual practice better than any other of its kind, and at the same time I have to be the experimenter in the laboratory divining new things. These two occupations are incompatible. Besides, I have to spend most of my time traveling at express rates from place to place. Sometimes I am at Paris in the quiet office at the Ministry, and the next day I find myself in a muddy ambulance of the advanced trenches, or even nearer still to the firing line. Here it seemed as if the whole character of the French race had been modified. The men have recovered the warlike spirit of their forefathers, they have the smiling courage of the heroes of the First Empire.

The day before yesterday we lunched with

fifteen officers in a chateau within range of the German cannon. The table was strewn with violets. The dining-room was decorated with flowers. Wine flowed freely and the guests were much more quiet and contained than in the times of peace. Only a few minutes after lunch we were standing on a hill surrounded by the thunder of the French battery, which was answering the German fire. Every man that I have seen seems to be in the finest physical and moral condition. They are living in trenches but in the open air. Their health is excellent, their organizations perfect, and every man is confident that he is marching on to victory. . . .

Compiègne is tranquil only in appearance. The barriers which surround us do not isolate us from the outside world. I see about as many people here as in New York. Furthermore, I am traveling about a great deal in automobiles, either along the front or back and forth from Paris. All that takes up my time. Sometimes we meet with deplorable accidents, for only a few minutes' ride from Compiègne brings us out into the region of the shells. I have lost my best chauffeur and one of the others is disabled.

Our hospital is full of wounded men. Thanks to the surgeons of the ambulances of the advanced line, I get the kind of patients I want. My colleagues are all working hard and faithfully. Dr. D., of

whom I have spoken to you, has discovered some substance which seems to be able to sterilize flesh wounds. If our present experiments confirm our former observations we shall have made important progress in the treatment of wounds. D. is a remarkable man, and I am in hopes that our researches will result in important discoveries.

P. S.—I am sending you a copy of the report from headquarters signed by General D. It will give you a true idea of the way the Germans are conducting this war.

III

IN THE HEART OF THE COUNTRY

III

IN THE HEART OF THE COUNTRY

Chambre des Deputés
Lamaguère- p. Labarthe-
Inard (Haute Garonne)
8 October, 1914.

YOU can imagine in what anxiety we are living, but how could we be otherwise but firm and courageous, my wife and I, when everyone, I say even to the poorest peasant, is furnishing us a superb example of self-denial and heroism? You who have a soldier's soul would be rejoiced to see the calm courage, the coolness and the zeal of the recruits and the troops, whether in formation or at the stations. All through our cities of the South, which are so ardent and often so excitable, there is not a sign of excess nor a discordant note. It is truly a fine awakening.

Our 17th Corps was decimated in the earliest battles of the war and our region here acquitted its cruel debt to the country with noble generosity. From the economic point of view our population

has not suffered much, neither have raw materials been lacking. I am most happy to hear from you that the sympathies of the American people are with us. It is a great weight on our side of the balance.

The world has been too patient with Prussia. Read over again the speeches of Thiers, the Schleswig-Holstein affair and the history of the days of 1852. It is the same story over and over again of cynical lies and brutality. I have had experience with some of this policy in the Moroccan business. And I assure you that at times the cunning rascality of Berlin has perverted public opinion even in France. But now the eyes of the world are being opened, and civilized humanity realizes that the destruction not of Germany, but of the intolerable Prussian hegemony is essential to the world's welfare.

JEAN CRUPPI,
Former Minister.

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A Frenchman writes to an American friend from Paris, November 15, 1914:

Our France, our dear, beautiful France, has shown herself wonderful in this war. Pardon my enthusiasm, but when one speaks of a mother one is allowed to show pride in her. France has shown

herself wonderful because she has shown herself as she is in reality, and not as she has allowed herself to appear at times through sheer negligence. At 4 P.M. on the first of August the entire French people were welded in a single hour into the most perfect union. You would have to see it to realize it. There are no more parties in France. The revolutionist Hervé, but yesterday a man without a country, is shouting, "Vive la France!" The most rabid socialists of yesterday are at the front, dying under the common soldier's cloak or the officer's uniform. Not a newspaper indulges in partisan vituperation. In the great committee which has charge of the interests of the nation and whose members bring their private resources to the altar of the country, you will find side by side revolutionists and monarchists, radicals and progressives, bishops, pastors, rabbis and freemasons. There is only one *bloc* now in France—a *bloc* much more solid than the ordinary political one made of an amalgam of opposing wills and principles reconciled in appearance only. This *bloc* is one that has really existed all the time, namely, the soul of France which we thought was divided because it was covered over with the veneer of politics. The veneer disappeared on the first day of August, and revealed the soul of France. Oh, how little the people understand us who believe in the vanity, the inconsistency and the volatility of Frenchmen!

Instead you will find here a cool, resolute, confident seriousness, a robust optimism pervading all classes of society, sacrifices generously accepted, no lassitude, an iron determination to have done with the war, a loyal upright attitude towards our enemies, as towards our dear friends of England and Russia, a profound respect and an admiration without bounds for heroic Belgium, a thousand examples of private devotion to the fatherland in every form, and back of it all, resting on the unshakable confidence in our cause, the life of the nation goes on calmly in its work and, more than formerly, in its prayer too.

The German military machine, powerful as it is, will not prevail against the allied forces, strong in the conviction that their labors are founded on the right. The struggle will be long, we know, it will be hard too, but the German will break his wings in it at last—that we know too. So we look forward to the day of his exhaustion and defeat. I trust that you will not doubt the outcome in your country which has so freely given us its sympathy and shared with us the love of the truth. Believe me, we reciprocate fully this cordial sympathy.

You will find Europe much changed and frontiers altered, my dear friend. Believe with us that these changes will be favorable to our cause. Let me repeat again—certain that you will spread the truth

about if you hear any assertions to the contrary—that France at this moment is perfect in union, courage, strength, confidence, faith, truth and honor. She has men, she has faithful allies, she has time, she has heroism to spare—and she will conquer.

G. M.

* * * * *

From a Frenchwoman after the Battle of the Marne, September 15, 1914:

The enemy is repulsed. He is in flight, God be praised! Our hearts, so long filled with anguish at the steady advance of the barbarians, are now bursting with hope. The Germans have trodden our soil, they have plundered it, devastated it. What matters, now that they are departing, driven by the French armies! Our sacrifices will not have been in vain. All the men who have fallen and who shall still fall may rest in peace; and those who weep their loss will not have added to their grief the humiliation of a France conquered, wretched and flouted.

Joseph T. has been wounded. He has borne it with manly courage and is in hopes of getting back to the army soon. Madame A. [a colonel's wife] has cut short her vacation to the North and has returned to Limoges to work for the Red Cross. Marie de F. writes that her mother is dying and her husband has gone back to the service. They have

had no news of their son, whom you perhaps were the last one to bid good-bye at Paris, when he started out in all the pride of his new uniform of sub-lieutenant of Hussars. Captain R. d'A. and one of the sons of General O. have died on the field of honor. The list of our dead will be long.

France, dear France, so wounded, so cruelly robbed of her soil and her sons, will yet emerge victorious from this terrible crisis. We are under no illusions, but have the greatest confidence. Without doubt we still have a great deal to do to conquer the invader and drive him from our land. But this first success, the victory of the Marne, is a wonderful start. It has given our soldiers a zeal and ardor which will not flag. Let us not cease our prayers, and let us be ready to make every courageous sacrifice possible.

We are defending our cause valiantly, but the enemy is splendidly organized and intrenched on our soil. It will be hard to dislodge him. I see by the papers that the bombardment of the Cathedral of Rheims has stirred a feeling of righteous indignation in every nation. There is good reason for it too, for never was there so wanton and useless a piece of barbarism perpetrated. It is fit to rank with the massacres of Louvain.

The letter continues on September 30, 1914, after the capture of Antwerp:

It is raining and the dismal skies add to our desolation within. To think of this new disaster. The papers keep us in suspense with vague news and reports. Poor heroic Belgians! They have fought with all their strength, but how could they stand this iron tide? I recall the pretty little country so calm and peaceful which you and I have traveled over together in the good days of the past. It is frightful to think what has happened to it. And now it is our soil that is to suffer again. It is our own beautiful Paris that they are aiming at. Ah, how I should like to be back there!

Your mother received a letter from the R.'s this morning. Those brave people stayed on in their home and lived through the frightful hours of the battle. They went down into the cellar at first, but came up to aid the wounded who were brought to the house. They heard the cannon and musket fire for hours. . . .

I had a letter from Miss H. yesterday telling of the atrocities committed on the poor refugees. She saw them herself. It is frightful. . . .

October 9, 1914.

Oh, the never-to-be-forgotten hours of anguish and suspense! We seize the papers and devour the dispatches. They are upon us, trampling down the poor villages to reach us and crush us. They are

implacable, mad in their hate and fury. But we are resisting them magnificently. Oh, the sacrifices, the blood, the misery!

November 7, 1914.

Our race has proved that it is neither degenerate nor changed from the Frenchmen of former days who knew how to conquer. How they fight and die, our little *pioupious!* Our generals are splendid. We cannot doubt the final success of our armies. God grant that it may not be too long delayed, for it is heartrending to see so many suffer and die. We shall preserve the anguish of this hour in our hearts for ever, and our victorious fatherland will bear the marks of these tragic days. The dead will not return with victory, and whole families will be plunged into mourning for life. Oh, what a terrible thing war is, and what a responsibility rests on the shoulders of those who provoke war!

The letter concludes on November 20, 1914, from a little country town:

We devour five or six newspapers a day. We go every morning and sometimes in the afternoon to read the dispatches. At night there is a crowd around the bulletins. Some kind soul volunteers to read the dispatches aloud so that everybody can hear them. There is a great stir in the barracks

here. Some of the troops are getting ready to go to the front, and others are starting on their way singing songs. It makes you sad to think they are going, so many of them, to their death. . . .

I have already told you of the death of my brother, an artillery captain. He was killed near Rheims. Another one of my brothers, who had fought in China, re-enlisted as captain of the Zouaves and has just been killed in the North. He was picking up his wounded men one evening after a hot scrimmage in which he had been victorious, when a stray bullet struck him full in the breast. My third brother, sergeant in the light infantry, has been wounded. My sisters-in-law are bearing up nobly. But my parents, who went to Paris on the approach of the Germans, are inconsolable. They are trying to bear their grief stoically, believing that their sons died happy in dying for their country.

C. J.

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On January 12, 1915, a member of the French Academy writes:

We live on as you saw us. Madame B. is working for our ambulance, my son is at the ministry of war, and I am doing what I can to serve my country with pen and speech. Army and people alike are filled with confidence. There is no sign of boasting

but a calm, firm resolution to hold out to the bitter end. The campaign of terror inaugurated by the Germans has failed to frighten us.

E. Boutroux.

The distinguished philosopher, Henri Bergson, writes from Paris to a friend in America on the twenty-seventh of May, 1915:

The resolution to conquer has never been stronger in France than it is at present. The disposition of our soldiers, as indeed of our entire population, is admirable. They have all been reconciled from the start to the most extreme sacrifices, with the clear consciousness that it is not only the cause of their fatherland but that of humanity and civilization as well which is at stake. Under these conditions the result of the conflict cannot be doubtful. But what terrible sacrifices it will have cost!

H. Bergson.

* * * * *

P. A. writes on the eighteenth of April, 1915:

The war with its preoccupations and activities absorbs every minute, every second. I have been organizing hospitals, manufacturing powder, collecting stockings and underwear for the soldiers, writing appeals in the papers, making speeches on the platform, hurrying through the battlefields of Flanders in automobiles to install ambulance stations and

secure the prompt removal of the wounded. The nine months that have passed seem more like nine hours. It seems only yesterday that we were on the road to Albert among our bleeding soldiers. And here we are on the same road again to-day. It is the same struggle, the same spectacle, but thank God we are more confident of victory to-day.

I saw a night battle at Nieuport a little while ago which would have interested you. It was a superb moonlight night. I was in a ruined church which was paved with new tombstones. The bullets flew through the church grazing the pillars and chipping the corners of the walls. I have written an article about it and will send you the magazine. Why weren't you here? All our generals are filled with confidence, they believe that the enemy is pretty well exhausted, but still capable of dogged resistance and desperate attacks. Anyway they cannot break our lines now.

* * * *

As the war continues its economic demands grow clearer. Men are called from the front to work in the factories. Engineers, chemists, and other specialists are summoned home for their expert knowledge. They are sorry to leave the front, but their comrades write them from the firing line saying that they are glad to have them where they are. Whether in the shop or at the front they are serving their country, where they can serve her best, and there is

no distinction of merit between men who give their best service to France. On the twenty-eighth of June, 1915, P. G. writes:

A short time ago I read a letter from George in which he says that he is uncomfortable because he is at the rear in a position of safety. I want to give him and all of his companions who for various reasons are not at the front, my opinion on this point.

The present war is not like the wars of the Empire, depending upon force alone. It is a war of men and munitions. Nothing distresses me more than to think that our coffers are not full. Now, to have munitions we must have able men and we must have money. Goodwill is not enough. Without experts to manufacture them our munitions of war will be inferior and even worthless. We must have money too, and to that end our commerce and industry must be kept up. Now, in my judgment all those who on account of age or of infirmity or for reasons of professional skill, stay at home and do their duty to the extent of their powers, are as deserving as we who are at the front. We even have periods of rest that they do not. No, there are good Frenchmen and bad Frenchmen only—but the latter are extremely few.

IV

THE FUTURE

IV

THE FUTURE

IT is the certainty of victory that gives us our confidence, and what gives us this certainty of victory is the profound conviction of the injustice of the attack against us and the barbarity of our aggressors. M. Pottier, curator in the Museum of the Louvre and member of the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres, writes to a friend in Boston:

The war that they are waging against us is a war of extermination, into which no consideration for humanity or civilization enters. Except for the political consequences that might result, I am persuaded that the Germans would have no scruples in destroying the public buildings of Paris, including Notre Dame and the Louvre. I have done my best to safeguard the scientific treasures with which you are familiar, but still I must confess that they are not sufficiently protected against a deliberate and sustained bombardment. You would find it hard to recognize our poor galleries and showcases all

emptied of their contents. The Ambassador of the United States has been in to look at them.

Since we have seen the manifesto of the German "intellectuals," signed by names which we have long been accustomed to honor, we know that the scholars and artists of Germany are marching in the train of the men who burned the library of Louvain, bombarded Rheims, and shattered the sculptures of the cathedral which ten centuries of war and invasions had respected: the men who tried to fire Notre Dame de Paris with bombs, and killed children playing in our streets. No civilized nation in the world's history until to-day has given us the astonishing spectacle of men of science justifying and glorifying murderous attacks made contrary to the laws of nations and even in defiance of treaties signed by their own diplomats.

In addition to these brazen attempts to justify the outrages that they cannot deny, they enter a hearty and peremptory rebuttal of other attempts which are amply proven by official witnesses. "It is not true that . . . it is not true that"—they reiterate. How can men schooled in our scientific methods so demean themselves as to sign statements the truth of which they have no means of controlling, and on the matter of which they have no precise information, being far away from the scene of action?

I am glad to say that only five of the fifteen corresponding members and associates of our Academy of Inscriptions, and only four of the twenty members of the Academy of Science signed the manifesto. It seems then that even in Germany some few men are left with enough confidence to refuse their assent to such a criminal procedure. We are glad to believe it. Be assured of this, we are fighting to save the world from the Prussian corporal, from that spirit of hatred and proud domination that has invaded and contaminated the whole of Germany. We are combating the spirit of disloyalty and falsehood that has characterized every move of the Germans in this war: viz., the preparation for the war by a system of espionage and by purchases of land which have been going on for years; the tricks in battle, such as putting French uniforms on German soldiers in order to decoy our unsuspecting men into an ambush; the convoy of military stores under the flag of the Red Cross; the transportation of men and munitions into the trenches on stretchers; the ships disguised as Russian boats in order to enter the harbor and torpedo the unsuspecting enemy. Never, never will we conduct a war in such fashion, repugnant to all nations with a sense of honor and loyalty. We still believe that the moral factor is essential to give our soldiers the conviction that they are defending a just cause with honor.

Permeated with the idea that she is fighting for the defense of rights and liberties of the nations, France, with her good friends and allies is confident of the future. She knows that victory belongs to the nations that are just, calm, courageous and patient. She knows that all these qualities are hers. The man best qualified to speak on international law not only in France, but also, even by the consent of the Germans themselves, in the world, wrote from Bordeaux to an American friend in November, 1914:

I am deeply pained by this war as a man and a jurist, as well as a Frenchman. What good are all our grand efforts if they are to result only in "scraps of paper"? Do not believe that I am anxious only for the war to end. In spite of all the evils that war brings in its train, the Allies must fight on until the might of Germany is completely humbled, and due reparation is exacted from her; only then can we have a durable peace, and then perhaps can we begin to talk of international law.

LOUIS RENAULT.

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France has received too many expressions of general sympathy from the Americans to allow her to doubt the feelings of the greatest of the neutral powers. In the letter of M. Pottier to a friend in America, which we quoted a few pages above, are the following lines:

We can ask only for moral support from your country, but we may count on her for that. We have read with grateful emotions the words of your ex-President Roosevelt, which are so encouraging for us. We have understood the meaning of President Wilson's curt and dignified reply to Emperor William, when the Germans, whom the Allies accused of using dum-dum bullets, brought the impudent countercharge of their use by the French. The Americans well know which side is fighting for the right and for the respective treaties. The example of heoric Belgium points the way of duty.

While the German propagandists were exerting their zeal in pleading an unjust cause before the neutral nations, France judged that she had but to rely in dignified reticence on the sound judgment and sense of justice prevalent among the American people. M. Pottier writes from Paris on the tenth of April, 1915:

It is asked in a friendly way why the French do not strive more actively in America against the propaganda made by the partisans of the Germans. Compared with the quantities of letters, papers, prospectuses, and the views with which neutral nations are being swamped and inundated, our very modest communication and pamphlets attract but little attention.

I quite understand this: and often among our

friends we have been a little disturbed by this disproportion. Already efforts have been made to counteract this, and several associations have been organized to make clear to those in other countries the position we have taken in this great European struggle. . . .

One of my Italian colleagues, who from the beginning had courageously taken sides against Germany, wrote in *La Tribune* of Rome the fifth of February:

"I have expressed my sentiments of invincible horror for the torture inflicted upon innocent and heroic Belgium. I have expressed also, notwithstanding the deluge of German newspaper clippings which every day heap up the waste basket in my office—I have expressed my absolute conviction that this conflict was let loose by the agreement and by the deliberate wish of Austro-German imperialism.

"Immediately open war against me was declared by my honorable colleagues and by the German press. I saw pour in torrents into my house, like discharges of a famous '450,' not only insulting articles from newspapers of the Goths, but personal letters of protestation, of rage, of threats."

This is something of which the French could never be accused. We would take care not to imitate the indiscreet and stupid measures, which, far from obtaining the result expected, either exasperate or

make smile, according to the disposition, those who are the butt of these persecutors. Such a lack of moderation and of tact will lead always to the quick confusion of propaganda. *Ne quid nimis*, said Latins: Excess in everything is a fault.

For another reason: Does it at all concern us to answer back in ceaseless protestations, as do the Germans? Certainly not. Facts have spoken for us. What could we add? Is it not enough to recall the facts and to confirm them? One can well understand how our adversaries feel the need of pleading their cause. What a mass of assertions they must prove before the world!

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When American sympathy for the justice of our cause was freely expressed on the dastardly sinking of the *Lusitania*, the American papers sent to the front were hailed with joy by the Frenchmen who had come from America. They immediately converted them into a new kind of projectile and threw them into the German trenches. A young Frenchman who had lived eight years in this country writes from the trenches to a friend in New York, June 24, 1915:

Can you guess what it is to spend twelve days and twelve nights, most of which are *nuits blanches*, in first line with very little, if anything, to smoke? I don't think you can. So I will not attempt to tell you how I felt when I received your four boxes

of Oxfords. To be sure, many of my friends were in the same plight, and as selfishness is unknown in war time, they, too, had a glorious smoke on you. Many of them had never tasted American cigarettes, but I can assure you they found a real delight in puffing them. We usually have plenty of tobacco and everything else, and if this is the worst war men have ever seen, it is perfectly true that soldiers were never taken better care of. The fact that we ran short of tobacco was due to an unlooked-for *alerte* which woke us up in the middle of the night while we were *au repos.* In less time than it takes to say, we were going to an unknown destination. Talk about thrills—that's where you get them—and as strange as it may sound to an outsider, we do love them. If you recall what has been going on for the last few weeks, I think you can safely guess where we were bound for—'nough said. All the *piou-pious* that had a whack at them want to join me in thanking you. My friends in New York and elsewhere have sent me about a dozen boxes of one hundred Rameses, too, but I never received them, except one.

Reading over your letter makes me think how fortunate you are. Not that I regret having come —for I never would have dared show myself to anyone had I stayed—but simply because this is no life. I sometimes think how foolish men are to

have to resort to these mad orgies of wholesale murder and pillage in order to settle their differences. Talk about progress and civilization! Why, we might as well destroy the hypocrisy of it, since it cannot save us from these calamities, which already involve millions of homes. Why not set back the clock a few centuries and revert to the simple habits of the caveman. This may sound like strange talk to you; no doubt it will. But what do you think happens to the gray matter, when thousands, hundreds of thousands of shells are hurled above one's head? Although I do know something happens, I'm sure I don't know what it is. And what about the untold misery caused by such monstrous bombardments? No one is better able to know it than I. Sometimes I get so damned mad to see in what savage way the Germans conduct the war that I wish to turn in my brassard and get back my rifle. I've tried it twice now, but the major wouldn't let me.

Fortunately this trench warfare won't last for ever, and I do earnestly hope that we shall soon be able to measure ourselves in the open with *ces messieurs* and have it out like white men should. Of course they are not friends of the assault *à la baionnette.* I don't blame them either, for although they can run pretty fast—I've seen them—they can't get away from our *grognards.*

Some three weeks ago I threw a bunch of American

papers into their trench and waited for results. I wish you could have heard them groan and shout and swear; they were nothing short of raving mad. Evidently someone among them could read English, anyway, the *Tribune* cartoons were eloquent enough, especially the one you sent, also the one representing Count von Bernstorff addressing his country's sympathies to the American public over the *Lusitania* dead, entitled "The Crowning Insult." Have you seen it? It must have struck them harder than any shell ever did—at least judging from results.

J. B. C.

Another young Frenchman from America, a lieutenant, writes from the hospital where he lies severely wounded the following reflections on the character of the war and the combatants' views of the duty of neutrals:

I am indeed much better, though not very well as yet. I have been so near death and seen such terrible things, I have so often despaired of coming out of the struggle alive, that this new life here away from the battlefield seems a dream. In spite of the sufferings and great losses of men, we are full of hope and courage. We know we must triumph and victory will be ours. France will not die. It is necessary to the world, above all to the world of thought, your world and mine. This war is the enemy of

thought; it is the enslavement of all the truly spiritual powers to a work of tyranny and destruction.

One day, I hope, I shall tell you of some of the things I have seen, and then you will understand that Germany has only begun to spell the words, "humanity," "civilization," "personal dignity," "progress," based on principles of "liberty and justice." At first I could not be bitter towards the Germans. I thought the military party alone could be held responsible for the unspeakable cruelty of the soldiers. I said to myself, "The people are blind, they have been misled. They believe themselves attacked and threatened in their very existence. We must only free them, free Europe and her German people as well, from the German military cast." But facts do not allow me to make that distinction *bona fide* any longer. The Germans know what they are doing. They have been trained to think, to feel, to speak as their masters. They honor, venerate, follow them and have one faith—the absolute goodness of the German nation, the sacredness of its mission to a corrupted world; faith in a gospel of military strength which will make of all peoples either the slaves of Germany or willing subjects. We all must either love them, or, through fear, respect and honor them. They will give other nations independence if it harmonizes with the interests of the Empire, and if not, that independence will be

sacrificed on the altar of the German god. They have Germanized the very heavens. They have lent to the Being who stood for love and justice sentiments unworthy of a Turk! I am not speaking without knowledge. I have seen them victorious and defeated. I have seen them in battle and in prayer. I have seen them from Prussia and from Bavaria, and all breathe the same spirit of selfish and arrogant pride, of hatred, of domination at all costs and by all means. I have seen the maimed children, the slaughtered women, and the tortured old men. I have seen poor French prisoners crucified naked on the edge of a trench to frighten their comrades, and more and more. No mercy, no chivalry, no honor; all sacrificed that the Kaiser may rule over the land of our forefathers and bring to it the blessings of superior morality and Kultur!

On January 10, 1915, a naval lieutenant writes to his sister:

France faces with the utmost calm the probability that the war may last another year or more. We are resolute and prepared. We look for victory entire and absolute, not the annihilation of the German race, as our enemies accuse us of saying, but the annihilation of the military caste which is brutalizing the race. This war on war is the noblest cause possible, and the

people who are with us in it will be forever ennobled by it.

Things are going well. The Germans retreat only foot by foot to be sure, but the unexpected duration of the war makes them lose daily the benefit of their long and careful preparation, while it permits us and our Allies, the English, to provide the men and supplies which we lacked at the start. Prussia is under no illusion about this; the German newspapers prove it. I was at dinner a few days ago under General X's tent with several officers of the general staff. When the General spoke of the time that was still needed for France to win a complete victory, there was a scene of intense emotion, and all those fine soldiers cried in spontaneous patriotism, "Yes, yes, we will conquer or die!"

On July 18, 1915, an officer of reserves writes:

You ask me what the opinions are in this region on the subject of the winter campaign. I think I can tell you. When the winter campaign was mentioned men shrugged their shoulders at first.

After reflecting on all the pending questions people here have gradually come to the conclusion that a winter campaign is necessary (1) to allow Russia to regain her lost ground, (2) to allow the Allies to secure a decided advantage over the Boches in the

supply of munitions, and (3) to allow the Allies to make the blockade more stringent against Germany.

People have come to this position not with joy but with firm deliberation. We realize that we are where we are in this war because we were too little prepared. The Germans foresee everything, even the impossible. Let us learn to be as prudent as they, but with the ingenuity of the Frenchman. Then our victory is certain. And if it turns out that the winter campaign is not needed, there will be no reproach upon us for having prepared for it.

At the beginning of July a Frenchwoman wrote:

We are having fine summer weather. The country is beautiful, but how sad! No youth, no songs in the fields, no joyous laughter; we shall never laugh again in France, I fear. How can we? The younger generation will forget these days perhaps, but ours will carry to the grave the burden of this bloody drama.

Even after the temporary retreat of the Russians, French energy did not flag. Nobody was under an illusion as to the length of the war, but the morale continued unimpaired. The officers and soldiers at the front are allowed from time to time to return to the rear, and their presence always dispels gloom and melancholy, leaving only hope in the heart. One of the civilians thus cheered by their presence writes on July 19, 1915:

Warsaw is captured. They will turn back on us. But let us have confidence. Our soldiers are wonderful, so full of hope and courage. Still, when one sees them, one knows what they have endured. They all have a tragic look, but they are filled with energy and zeal, even though they are under no illusion as to the possible duration of the war.

* * * * *

"A little child shall lead them." One of the children of France wrote near the beginning of the war these lines of prophetic confidence:

We shall come out victorious and France, that most beautiful nation, will resume its peaceful, prosperous life. War will yield finally to peace and men will live happily forever.

PIERRE.

V

LAST LETTER

V

LAST LETTER

To the Editor of the French newspaper *Le Matin* of September 8, 1915:

THREE weeks ago I arrived in your country which I had left on the fifth of September, 1914. At that moment I was carrying away with me the great spectacle of your mobilization. This solemn and magnificent rising of the manhood of a whole people had left in my mind the image of a quasi-religious spectacle in its splendid solemnity. During the mobilization I had many talks with the soldiers and from these conversations I had derived a great deal of hope and comfort. Ever since I left you, I have thought so often of these brave people, who without noise or boast but in silent dignity went forth to a war of national defense and of justice, that I was most anxious to see them again and at the same time to revisit the several hundred Alsatian and Belgian refugee children that some of my compatriots and I had been able to gather

together at the beginning of the war, and who with many others since collected are to-day scattered about in colonies throughout the various departments of France.

Thanks to the courtesy of Mr. Delcassé, I was allowed the rare privilege of traversing the roads through the army zone between Paris and Nancy, and went up to the first lines. What I saw gave me an impression as strong and as favorable as that of the mobilization. All these men who went away with such calm and resolution remained in the same state of mind, with perfect confidence in the final victory of France and of their chiefs. Everywhere I saw signs of the old *gaieté française*. Nowhere did I hear the slightest murmur of complaint Everyone was doing his duty. The war might well be very long and very painful, but the result was sure. Already they had acquired the moral superiority, and if ever the enemy came out of his trenches his defeat was certain.

I saw villages in Lorraine utterly ruined and destroyed by the Germans. I well remember one day spent at Gerbéviller. The women and the old men told me: "We have returned. It was indeed necessary to replant the fields and to take up life again," and in this village, completely burned, where I learned that more than one hundred civilians were shot, everybody was smilingly at work. The fields

had been tilled as perfectly as usual and the crops were beautiful. Scattered about here and there, throughout the fields, were little red patches of flowers, surmounted by a white cross, under which the defenders of Lorraine slept. One who has not seen it cannot understand how a visitor is moved by the spectacle of this strength of soul.

But what is most painful for us Americans in all this is the proof that this war was a war of systematic destruction, a war, as my friend Mr. Emile Boutroux said to me in its beginning, conducted with scientific barbarism. It is not merely that drunken soldiers pillaged the villages. Here and there a house remains standing, evidently spared because it had borne a certain mark. The rest were systematically burned. Everything was done with discipline and order.

We are, at home in the United States, somewhat in the same state of mind that France was before the war, believing in humanity, in justice, in pity, and we have to see the traces of this methodically calculated carnage and destruction—we have to see this country so systematically devastated, as the Germans of Cæsar's time could not have devastated it, to believe in the reality of the things which we read in our newspapers. We are apt to think that there must be a large part of exaggeration in all this and that Prussian militarism should not be judged by a

few isolated atrocities. Now I know the truth and will not hesitate to repeat it again and again.

One man who had witnessed the assassination of the hostages of Gerbéviller, another who had seen the murder of the Mayor of Senlis, told me of these things in accents of simplicity and sincerity that bore out the official reports. They told me of the cynical propositions, the brutal jests with which the German soldiers carried on their enterprise of devastation and murder and there was in their recitals so much simplicity, loyalty and candor that little doubt could remain in one's mind.

When in the face of such an enemy, unchained, after a year of war, one returns to find France serene and without anxiety about the ultimate result one understands that if man is stronger than nature by his intelligence, he is stronger than injustice by his morality.

All these things seen at close range convince us Americans that France can never be vanquished; that she retains the same greatness of soul that has persisted through the centuries since the barbarian invasions; that stronger to-day than she has ever been, she will, after the war, be more respected and more admired than she was during her greatest centuries of glory.

FREDERIC R. COUDERT.

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